

**Title:** Research Sessions at MENC Conferences: 1970-1990

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*It is with pleasure that we inaugurate the reprint of the entire seven volumes of The Quarterly Journal of Music Teaching and Learning. The journal began in 1990 as The Quarterly. In 1992, with volume 3, the name changed to The Quarterly Journal of Music Teaching and Learning and continued until 1997. The journal contained articles on issues that were timely when they appeared and are now important for their historical relevance. For many authors, it was their first major publication. Visions of Research in Music Education will publish facsimiles of each issue as it originally appeared. Each article will be a separate pdf file. Jason D. Vodicka has accepted my invitation to serve as guest editor for the reprint project and will compose a new editorial to introduce each volume. Chad Keilman is the production manager. I express deepest thanks to Richard Colwell for granting VRME permission to re-publish The Quarterly in online format. He has graciously prepared an introduction to the reprint series.*

# Research Sessions at MENC Conferences: 1970-1990

By Steven K. Hedden

*The University of Arizona*

**T**he program booklets for the national meetings of the Music Educators National Conference (MENC) provide documentation of several changes in research sessions over the last 20 years. Some of these are readily apparent—a switch of reporting format from paper-reading to “kinescope summaries” to poster presentations; others may not be manifest in “A versus B” comparisons, but become evident when one examines the aggregated data from the 12 national meetings over the last 20 years. This article describes and analyzes some of the changes which have transpired between 1970 and 1990. The areas of focus include number of research reports presented, number of researchers who made presentations, number of papers with co-authors, proportion of reports presented by women, number of authors with multiple presentations at a single convention, and frequency of presentation by researchers during these 12 conferences.

## Observations

The total number of research reports presented over the 20-year span was 674. The average, then, would be 56.17 reports per convention, but there has been a steady rate of growth in the number of presentations, as Figure 1 shows. Incidentally, the data-point for 1982 in figures 1, 2, and 5 is somewhat misleading; the MENC meeting was held in conjunction with the Annual Meeting of the Texas Music Educators Association (TMEA), and the convention booklet lists both MENC and TMEA research sessions. The author chose not to distinguish between the two on the basis of the following rationale: Because

the TMEA sessions were open to all MENC members, they were, in effect, “national” ones. Indeed, many of the presenters at the 1982 TMEA sessions have presented their research at other national conferences.

The average number of presentations was 17.50 for the 1970 and 1972 conventions, when the paper-reading format used at the research sessions allowed 15 minutes for each investigation. The “kinescope summary” format appeared for the first time in 1974; each author had five minutes to report the research, so at least 15 investigators presented their research in each of the two 90-minute sessions that year. With the continued use of the kinescope format, the average number of presentations was 31.33 for the 1974-1978 meetings.

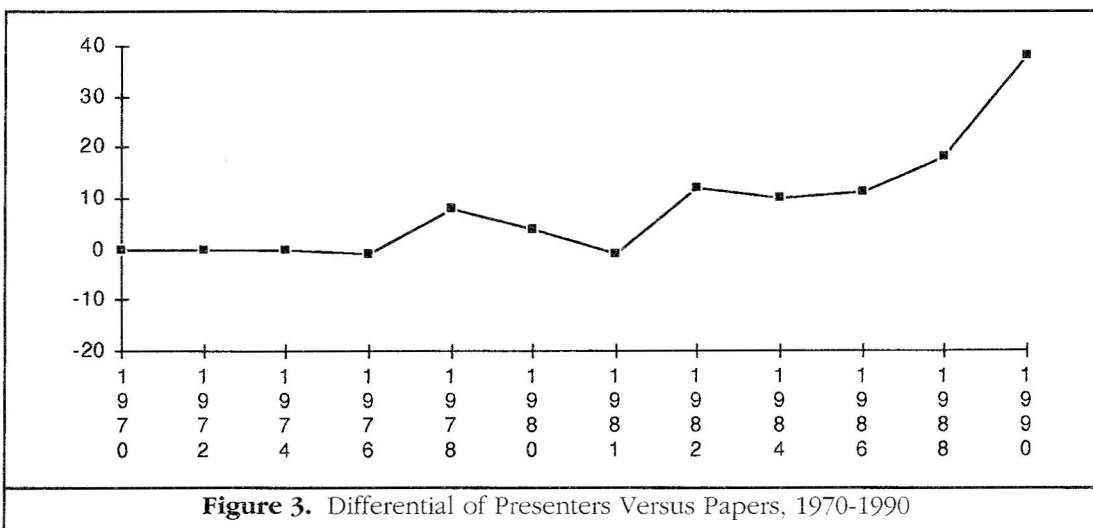
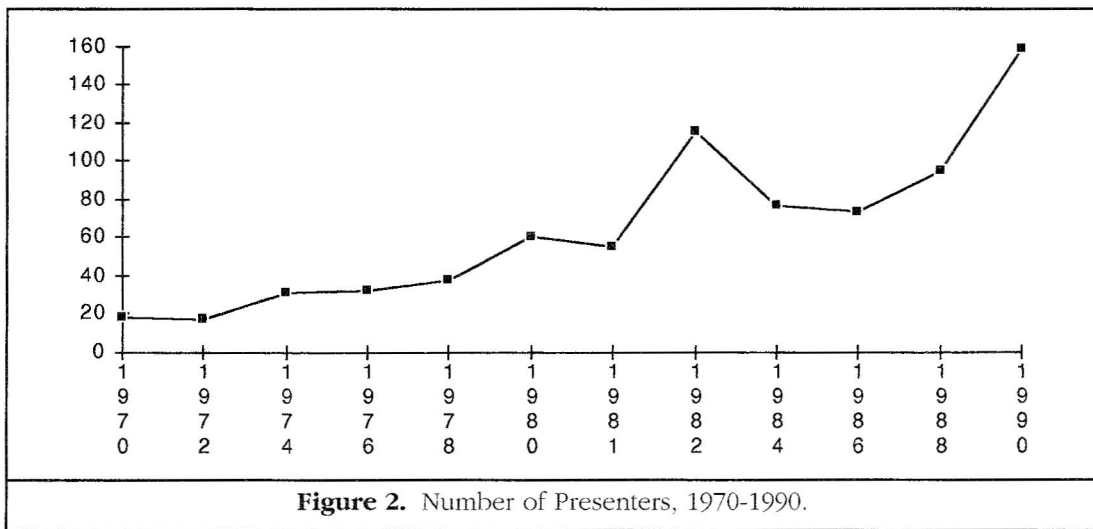
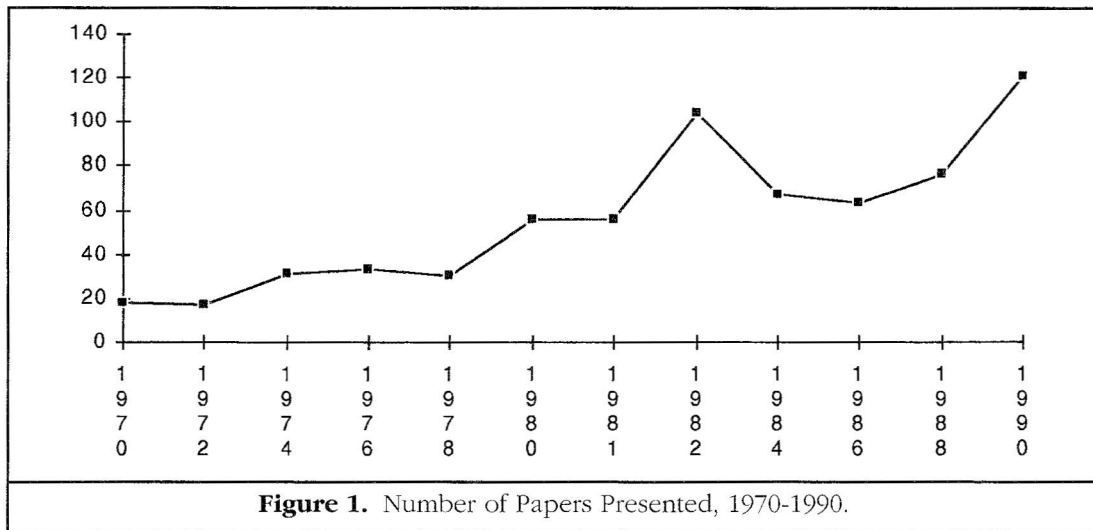
The first appearance of the poster format occurred in 1980, when researchers presented 49 projects in a three-hour session (and eight other papers in paper-reading sessions). With the poster format as the predominant mode, the average number of presentations was 59.67 for 1980, 1981, and 1984; and 87.00 for 1986-1990.

As one would expect, an increased number of presentations would indicate an increased number of investigators. Figure 2 documents the changes over the 20 years as a total of 455 scholars presented their research; the average number of presenters changed from 24.50 for 1970-1976, to 67.25 for 1978-1982, and to 101.25 for 1984-1990.

Figure 3 provides a graphic illustration of another noteworthy shift over the 20 years. For 1970 through 1981, the number of papers and the number of presenters are almost equal; in other words, very few papers have co-authors. In contrast, more than one-third of the papers presented in 1990 had more than one author (41 of 121).

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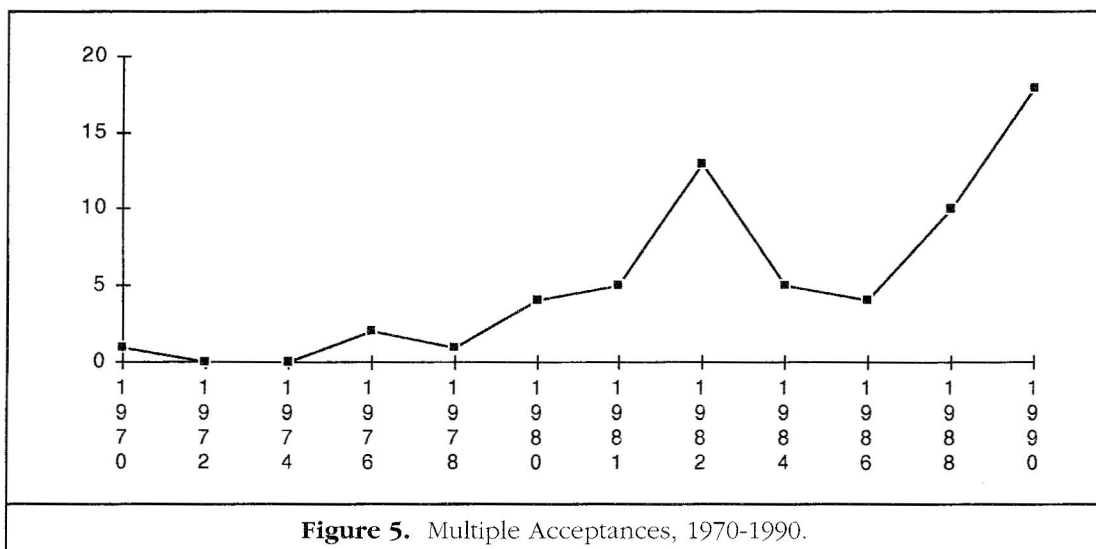
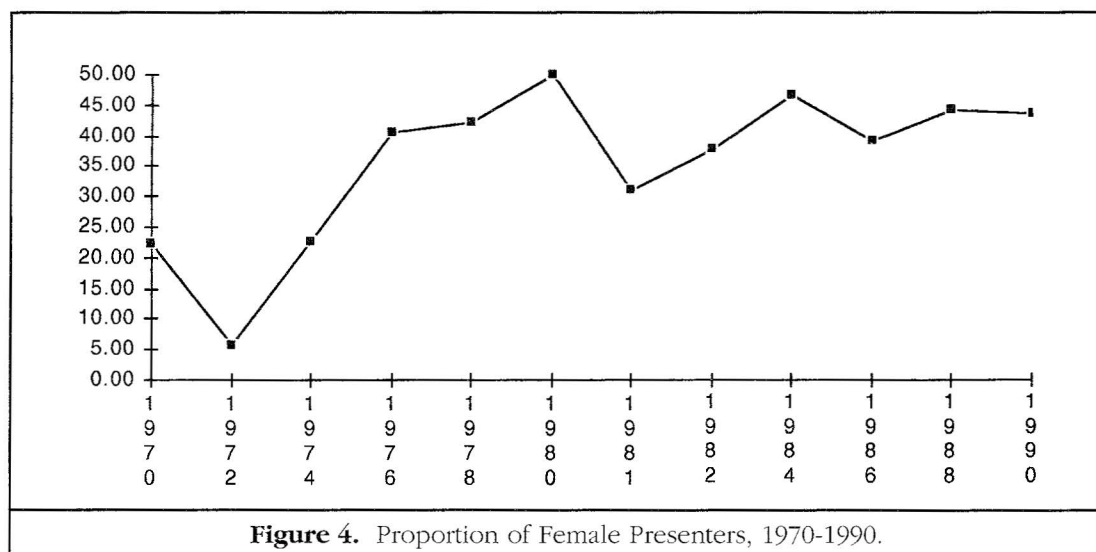
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Another important change over the 20 years is apparent in Figure 4. In 1970, four women—Marilyn Curt Vincent, Phyllis Dorman, Janice Klemish, and Esther Rothman—presented their research (22.22 percent of the total number of presenters). A substantial change had occurred by 1976, when women made slightly more than 40 percent of the presentations. Generally speaking, the proportion of papers presented by women over the last 15 years has hovered around 40 percent; for example, the percentage for 1990 was 43.3 percent (69 presenters). Presentations by women have been in the majority at one meeting (1980—51.7 percent), and there was a 50/50 balance in 1984.

Women's increased participation in research over the 20-year period also is underscored by the fact that females served as the organizing chairperson for research at the 1986 and 1990 conventions (Carol Rogel Scott and Judith Jellison, respectively). In comparison, males acted as the organizing chairperson for all meetings between 1970 and 1984.

The last change that emerges from the data analysis is the increased number of multiple acceptances between 1970 and 1990. As shown in Figure 5, only one person—Raymond Allvin—had two papers accepted for presentation at the 1970 meeting; by 1990, 17 scholars had two papers accepted and two had three—Robert Duke and Kate



Gfeller. The first instance of a "triple acceptance" had occurred in 1980, when Ruth Zwissler made three presentations.

The final observation focuses on frequency of presentation over the 12 meetings. No single author presented at all meetings, but five persons reported their research at eight or more of them: nine, Clifford K. Madsen; and eight, Hal Abeles, John Geringer, Randall Moore, and Rudolf E. Radocy. A complete listing of those who presented at five or more of the meetings appears in Table 1.

### Analysis and Discussion

A number of hypotheses might be advanced to explain the steady growth in the

number of presentations between 1970 and 1990. Obviously the changes in the reporting format had an important influence on the number of papers that could be accepted. Where the 1970 convention booklet lists only 17 investigations to be presented in almost seven hours of paper-reading sessions, the 1974 booklet identifies 31 studies to be reported in only three hours of kinescope summaries. Most recently, the poster format for the 1990 convention allowed 118 reports to be presented during the two sections of the three-hour session.

The increase in the number of papers over the 20-year period cannot be explained solely by the changes in reporting format; indeed, the former item probably is the cause of the latter. Perhaps the most plausible of the other explanations is that a sizeable number of music educators now have completed research methodology courses; no longer are there only a few persons in music education who are prepared to conduct research studies. Also, each semester a substantial number of graduate and undergraduate students are enrolled in research methodology courses in which instructors require each student to complete a research paper. These teachers encourage and frequently expect the students to submit the completed project for presentation at some kind of a professional meeting.

Another explanation is that the "typical" promotion/tenure guidelines at many universities have changed over the 20 years. It is increasingly common to encounter guidelines which stipulate that professors must publish or make presentations at national conventions if they expect to receive a promotion and/or tenure. Indeed, a frequently stated expectation at research universities is that a candidate for promotion to associate professor will have attained national visibility for his or her creative work or research. It seems clear that the increased adoption of this criterion has acted to increase the number of research papers submitted for MENC (and state MEA) meetings; many university-based music educators are expected to "publish/present or perish."

Also, the growth in the number of research presentations possibly reflects the improved "support system" for research which has

**Table 1.** Researchers Presenting at Five or More Conferences, 1970-1990.

Researcher	N of Conferences
Madsen, Clifford	9
Abeles, Harold	8
Geringer, John	8
Moore, Randall	8
Radocy, Rudolf	8
Asmus, Edward	7
Haack, Paul	7
Brown, Amy	6
Burnsed, Vernon	6
Flowers, Patricia	6
Hamann, Donald	6
Taylor, Jack	6
Wapnick, Joel	6
Webster, Peter	6
Yarbrough, Cornelia	6
Brand, Manny	5
Campbell, Patricia S.	5
Duke, Robert	5
Forsythe, Jere	5
Heller, George	5
Killian, Janice	5
LeBlanc, Albert	5
Pembroke, Randall	5
Salzberg, Rita	5
Sims, Wendy	5
Sink, Patricia	5

evolved over the last 20 years. At the 1970 convention, there was no scheduled opportunity for researchers to interact in an informal setting; not until 1976 was there a session which listed general discussion as a focus—the 1976 meeting of the Society for Research in Music Education. (The 1976 booklet also includes three Music Education Research Council Rap Sessions and the initial luncheon meeting for the Music Researchers Exchange.) The 1978 booklet lists the initial meeting of the Special Research Interest Groups (SRIGs) that the Music Education Research Council established in order to facilitate communication among researchers in various areas of music education; the 1978 SRIG meetings focused primarily on organizational matters.

In addition, the paper-reading format for the research sessions in the early 1970s did not allow for the kind of social and intellectual interchange that now occurs with the poster format. In the early 1970s, many presenters had the perception that the questions raised during the question/answer portion of each reporting session possibly had as their impetus the questioner's desire for personal aggrandizement rather than a genuine quest for personal understanding of the research. The switch to the kinescope format and the later change to the poster format removed the public forum for questions of this type.

The second observation described in the preceding section was that an increased amount of co-authorship has been evident at recent conventions. The apparent trend toward co-authorship may reflect the use of a mentoring model by music education researchers, for 25 (60.9 percent) of the 41 co-authored papers presented at the 1990 meeting are the products of two or more researchers from the same institution (the corresponding statistics for 1986 and 1988 are 53.8 percent and 53.6 percent, respectively). At least 15 of these 25 co-authored papers were produced by teams that appear to be comprised of an experienced researcher and one or more novices.

The previously stated observation regarding the ratio of female researchers to male researchers was that women have made 40 percent to 50 percent of the research presen-

tations at recent conferences and that women have chaired the research sessions at two of the last three national conventions. Given this unmistakable evidence of women's full participation in recent research activities, it is surprising to find a striking male-female difference when one examines the papers from 1988 to 1990 that have co-authors. Approximately one half of all these papers were from "same sex" teams (46.4 percent and 48.8 percent, respectively); considering only the papers from same-sex teams, the all-male groups outnumbered the all-female groups by a factor of three to one (10:3 in 1988 and 15:5 in 1990). One can speculate that the disproportionality may be tied to differences in networking patterns, for seven of the eight papers (87.5 percent) produced by all-female teams indicated the same institutional affiliation for the two authors (and the authors of the eighth paper were from a major university and the only public school system in the same city of approximately 50,000); the corresponding statistic for the all-male teams was 56.6 percent.

The fourth observation—that multiple acceptances have become increasingly frequent over the last ten years—also deserves discussion. Several explanations for this change can be advanced. In 1970, when only 17 papers were accepted for presentation, it seemed that the mores of the research community were not supportive of authors who wished to submit multiple papers. Twenty years later, when 121 papers were accepted, a different attitude apparently prevailed and there almost seemed to be a competition to determine who could get the greatest number of papers accepted.

Of course, the increased number of double or triple acceptances also reflects the increased number of papers originating from two- or three-person teams. For the 19 scholars who had multiple acceptances for the 1990 meeting, only one person (Randall Moore) had two single-author papers accepted; 9 of the other 18 persons submitted only co-authored papers.

The final observation dealt with the frequency of presentation by the 455 individual authors over the 20 years. Although several scholars made presentations at five or more




of the 12 meetings, 307 presented at only one meeting. Slightly more than one-third of these (33.8 percent) can be traced to the 1988 and 1990 meetings, so classifying these 104 researchers as nonrepeaters seems to be premature.

### Conclusions

The trends revealed by analysis of the accumulated data are probably highly desirable to most music educator-researchers. An increasing amount of research is being reported to the profession by almost equal numbers of men and women, and greater collaboration is occurring among researchers.

Examining the changes and trends in research presentations at MENC conferences provides insight to the larger picture of the growth and development of research in music education. This study indicates both the direction of the profession, and the increased and diversified pool of researchers who are making substantial contributions to

the field. Overall, this growth reflects the positive status of research in music education. The author suggests that these trends certainly augur well for the profession, so someone surely will want to monitor them by replicating this study in 2000. 

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Berry, L., Jr. (1991). [Review of Ensley, J. E. (1988). Recruitment and retention of Hispanic students in selected successful school string programs. Doctoral Dissertation, University of Southern California]. *The Bulletin of the Council for Research in Music Education*, 108, 73-75,

*Jeanette Eastwood Ensley*

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